

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6634

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DIA WASHDC

COMUSMACTHAI

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12590

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: PLANNED ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION FOR JULY 4 SITREP 3

REF: BANGKOK 12334

SUMMARY: DR. KRASAE CHANAWONG, LEADER OF THE NEW FORCE PARTY, SAID JUNE 27 THAT HE WOULD SHORTLY GIVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE WILL EXPRESS HIS PARTY'S DISAPPROVAL OF THE PLANNED JULY 4 DEMONSTRATIONS. THEY HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED A BAD PRESS FROM OTHER QUARTERS. THE DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER TOLD US THAT THE DEMONSTRATION ORGANIZERS HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THEIR GOALS. GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN SAID JUNE 26 THAT THE MILITARY HAD DEVELOPED A PLAN FOR MEETING THE DEMONSTRATIONS EXPECTED AT THE UPCOUNTRY
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BASES. THE CONSULATES REPORT LOCAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE POSSI-

BILITIES OF IMPENDING DEMONSTRATIONS. THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS POSTPONED ITS ANNUAL CELEBRATION. END SUMMARY.

1. DR. KRASAE CHANAWONG, LEADER OF THE NEW FORCE PARTY, TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER JUNE 27 THAT HE WOULD HOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE LATER IN THE DAY CONCERNING THE PROPOSED JULY 4 ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION. HE SAID THAT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP HAD AGREED TO PUBLICLY INDICATE NO SUPPORT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION. HE WILL ARGUE THAT AMERICANS WERE ALREADY WITHDRAWING THEIR MILITARY UNITS, AND THAT THE DEMONSTRATION RAN THE RISK OF UNNECESSARILY ANTAGONIZING THE UNITED STATES WITH WHOM THAILAND WILL WANT TO HAVE CONTINUED RELATIONS. KRASAE SAID THE PARTY WAS TAKING THIS STEP BECAUSE OF RUMORS THAT THE DEMONSTRATION MIGHT LEAD TO VIOLENCE. DEMOCRAT PARTY LEADER SENI PRAMOT GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE ALONG THESE SAME LINES JUNE 25.

2. THE PROPOSED DEMONSTRATION CONTINUES TO COLLECT A BAD PRESS (BANGKOK 12445). A BANGKOK POST EDITORIAL ON JUNE 25 QUESTIONED THE PROPRIETY OF THE DEMONSTRATOR'S TARGET (FBIS BK250317Y JUNE 75). DEMOCRAT PARLIAMENTARIAN FROM BANGKOK, SAMAK SUNTHONWET, IS THE SOURCE OF A STORY CIRCULATING BANGKOK THAT THE KING IS CONCERNED ABOUT DISTURBANCES IN THE COUNTRY. THE IMPLICATION OF THE STORY IS THAT THE PALACE ALSO DOES NOT APPROVE OF THE JULY 4 DEMONSTRATION.

3. PRUTHISAN CHUMPHON, CHULALONGKON UNIVERSITY LECTURER IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER JUNE 26 THAT THERE WERE DEFINITE SPLITS WITHIN THE NATIONAL STUDENT CERNTER OF THAILAND (NSCT), AND THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF CHULALONGKON AND KASETSAT UNIVERSITIES WITHDREW THEIR MEMBERSHIP. ANOTHER CHULALONGKON PROFESSOR TOLD US THAT HE ADVISED HIS STUDENTS TO STICK WITH THE NSCT, AND REFORM IT FROM WITHIN. ALTHOUGH MANY STUDENTS APPARENTLY DISAGREE WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PLANNED JULY 4 DEMONSTRATION, THERE IS A RELUCTANCE TO DISMANTLE THE NSCT. THE BANGKOK POST REPORTED JUNE 27 THAT THE REFERENDUM ON CHULALONGKON MEMBERSHIP IN THE NSCT HAS BEEN DROPPED. WHILE THE NSCT MAY HAVE WEATHERED THIS STORM, THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO

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BE A GROUNDSWELL OF STUDENT SUPPORT FOR THE JULY 4 DEMONSTRATION.

4. THE DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER TOLD THE REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER JUNE 26 THAT THE DEMONSTRATION ORGANIZERS HAD FAILED TO OBTAIN MUCH PUBLIC SUPPORT. PRELIMINARY RALLIES WERE SPARSELY ATTENDED. HE REPORTED THAT BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUPPORT, THE ACTIVISTS ARE APPROACHING ENGINEERING STUDENTS, A LESS SOPHISTICATED

AUDIENCE. THERE REPORTEDLY IS LITTLE LABOR, AND ALMOST NO FARMER SUPPORT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION.

5. LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN TOLD THE POLITICAL/ MILITARY COUNSELOR JUNE 26 THAT THE MILITARY HAD RECENTLY MET TO DISCUSS PLANS COUNTERING THE DEMONSTRATIONS EXPECTED AT UPCOUNTRY BASES. HE INDICATED THAT THE MILITARY WAS DETERMINED TO TAKE A STRONG STAND. AARMA REPORTS THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE FIRST ARMY STATIONED AROUND BANGKOK ARE ON A LOW LEVEL OF ALERT AND THAT ARMY COMMANDER KRIT SIWARA HAS CANCELLED HIS ANNUAL JULY 5 DIPLOMATIC GOLF TOURNAMENT (DAO BANGKOK IR 6 895 0335 75).

6. UP COUNTRY

A. THE SONGKHLA CONSUL REPORTS THAT LOCAL CIVILIAN, POLICE, AND MILITARY WILL CONVENE A STRATEGY SESSION WITH THE GOVERNOR ON JUNE 27. ALTHOUGH POLICE AND MILITARY OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD THE CONSUL THAT THE LOCAL DEMONSTRATION WILL BE MINIMAL, THE CONSUL BELIEVES LOCAL CIVILIANS WANT TO MAKE CERTAIN NOTHING EMBARRASSING HAPPENS. THE CONSUL'S ASSESSMENT IS THAT A SMALL GROUP OF STUDENTS WILL ARRIVE AT HIS RESIDENCE THE MORNING OF JULY 4 WITH A LOCAL TV CREW, PRESENT A PETITION, AND CARRY ON A DIALOGUE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CAMERAS. THE CONSUL HAS RECEIVED NO THREATS OF VIOLENCE, YET, AND EXPECTS THAT POLICE CAN MAINTAIN ORDER.

B. THE CHIANG MAI CONSUL REPORTS THAT THE LOCAL POLICE BELIEVE THAT THE SCENARIO FOR JULY 4 WILL BE A RALLY, AND THEN A MARCH TO BOTH THE CONSULATE AND USIS. SOME INDICATORS SUGGEST THAT THE DEMONSTRATION MAY BE MORE INTENSIVE THAN THAT DURING THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT. WHILE CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS SAY THEY ARE PLANNING FOR CLASSES AS USUAL ON THE FOURTH, THE 3000 STUDENT NORTHERN TECHNICAL INSTITUTE EXPECTS A LARGE ABSENTEE RATE ON THAT DAY BECAUSE
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THE PREVIOUS TWO DAYS WILL BE FREE OF CLASSES DUE TO SCHOOL CELEBRATIONS.

C. CHIANG MAI ALSO REPORTS THAT THE ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE (RTAF) WARNED THE OICC CONTINGENT WORKING ON THE DOI INTHANON PROJECT THAT STUDENTS INTEND TO HOLD A DEMONSTRATION THERE ON THE FOURTH. THE RTAF ADVISED THE AMERICANS TO REMOVE THEIR VEHICLES AND STAY AWAY FROM THE PROJECT SITE THAT DAY. ANOTHER REPORT SUGGESTS THAT THE LIVING QUARTERS OF THE USAF DET 415 BEHIND THE RINCOME HOTEL MAY ALSO BE A STUDENT TARGET.

D. THE UDORN CONSUL REPORTS THAT THE GOVERNOR HAS ASKED THAT ALL US MILITARY PERSONNEL REMAIN ON BASE FOR JULY 3 AND 4. THE CONSUL WILL MEET WITH THE GOVERNOR ABOUT THE SITUATION IN UDORN.

7. THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS DECIDED TO POSTPONE ITS ANNUAL JULY 4 COMMUNITY GATHERING IN BANGKOK. THE EMBASSY PLANS TO CONTINUE WITH THE VIN D'HONNEUR.

8. COMMENT. THE DEMONSTRATION PLANNERS APPEAR TO HAVE MISJUDGED THE AMOUNT OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THEIR GOALS. THIS SITUATION CREATES THE UNCOMFORTABLE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MAY SEEK TO CREATE AN INCIDENT WHICH WOULD BOLSTER THEIR CAUSE.

9. WHILE THE SECURITY FORCES SEEM PREPARED FOR ANY EVENTUALITY, PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT COMMUNICATES A CALM FACADE. HE PROMISED THE AMBASSADOR JUNE 27 TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT VIOLENCE OR AN UNPLEASANT INCIDENT. KHUKRIT AND A LARGE RETINUE WILL BE IN PEKING AND HONG KONG UNTIL JULY 5.

10. THE DISAPPROVING PUBLICITY THE JULY 4 DEMONSTRATION HAS MET WILL BE INSTRUMENTAL IN REDUCING THE EXPECTED CROWDS. THIS IS PROBABLY THE FIRST TIME THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE COMMENTARY ON A PROPOSED DEMONSTRATION. WHITEHOUSE

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